US Army Corps of Engineers ®
St. Paul District
www.mvp.usace.army.mil
Public Affairs

Corps Facts
St. Croix Watershed
Reconnaissance Study

Sept. 14, 2006
FS-40

The St. Croix River is one of the richest ecological and recreational resources in the region. It flows about 160 miles from near Solon Springs, Wis., to its confluence with the Mississippi River at Prescott, Wis. It contains one of the few remaining reproducing populations of the federally-listed, endangered Winged mapleleaf mussel. It also contains a strong population of the federally-listed, endangered Higgins' eye pearlymussel, as well as other state-listed species.

The St. Croix River is also unique in that lies close to a large population center in the Twin Cities. In total, the river drains around 7,800 square miles, 4,800 square miles in Wisconsin and 3,000 in Minnesota. This same area is experiencing rapid urban growth and development, which could possibly threaten the environmental health of the river. Projections indicate a population increase of about 39 percent within the watershed by 2020.

Study Description

At the request of Congress, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, began a reconnaissance study to investigate possible water resource projects within the St. Croix River watershed. This reconnaissance study has great flexibility and can look at a variety of potential water resource opportunities throughout the basin. These include, but are not limited to, opportunities to improve and protect water quality, restore aquatic habitat, protect endangered species, manage aquatic invasive species, reduce erosion and sediment and reduce flood damages. The study may also include comprehensive watershed planning. It will focus primarily on water resource and environmental problems and opportunities in both the tributary watersheds and the main stem of the St. Croix River.

Project Status

The Corps' St. Croix Watershed Reconnaissance Study is the first step toward more detailed planning and is needed prior to obtaining any federal funding for water resource construction projects in the basin. The federal government will pay the estimated $200,000 cost for the reconnaissance study, but the costs of a more detailed feasibility study would need to be shared, 50 percent, with a local or state partner. Part of the reconnaissance study is to identify these potential feasibility project sponsors. The reconnaissance study began in June 2005 and will be completed during the fall of 2007. A draft report for this study has been completed and is available.